

REMARKS

Claims 1–19 are pending in the application. New claim 20 has been added with this reply. Claims 1, 10, and 19 are independent claims. Claims 2–9 and 20 depend, directly or indirectly, from claim 1; claims 11–19 depend, directly or indirectly from claim 10.

Claims 1–19 were rejected under §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the invention. Specifically, the phrase “the other direction” in claims 1, 10, and 19 lacked antecedent basis. The above amendments correct the antecedent basis problem. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1–19 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 4,317,585 (“Boice”) in view of U.S. Patent 4,192,553 (“Blose”). To the extent this rejection still applies, it is respectfully traversed because the cited references do not teach or suggest all of the limitations of the invention, as recited in the amended claims.

Claims 1 and 19, as currently amended, relate to a threaded pipe connection including a pin member having an external shoulder and an internal shoulder, a box member having an internal shoulder and an external shoulder, and a wear indicator disposed on one of the external shoulder of the box member, the internal shoulder of the box member, the external shoulder of the pin member, and the internal shoulder of the pin member. Claim 10, as currently amended, recites providing a pin member having an internal shoulder and an external shoulder, providing a box member having an internal shoulder and an external shoulder, and providing a wear indicator for the connection wherein the wear indicator is disposed on at least one of the group consisting of the external shoulder of the box member, the internal shoulder of the box member, the external shoulder of the pin member, and the internal shoulder of the pin member.

The Boice patent, on the other hand, relates to a single length of drill pipe with permanent marks at each end of the drill pipe. The marks are used to determine the amount of excessive angular deformation of the section of drill pipe. Col. 1, ll. 21–24. Angular

x (deformation is caused by subjecting the section of drill pipe to excessive torque. Col. 1, ll. 9-13. The marks indicate when a section of drill pipe has been over torqued. Boice teaches an over-torque indicator for pipe; it does not teach or suggest a wear indicator for a threaded connection. Moreover, Boice does not teach marks that are disposed on *any* shoulder of a threaded pipe connection. The Blose patent does not make up for this deficiency.

Neither Boice nor Blose, whether considered separately or in combination, teach or suggest the claimed invention. Thus, claims 1, 10, and 19 are patentable over the cited art. Dependent claims are patentable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

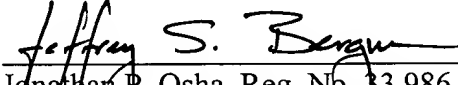
U.S. Patent 6,009,611 ("the '611 patent"), issued to Adams *et al.*, was cited in the Notice of References Cited. Applicant notes that the priority date of the present application, July 30, 1998, predates the filing date of the application that matured into the '611 patent, September 24, 1998. Accordingly, the '611 patent is not prior art against the present application.

CONCLUSION

Applicant believes this reply to be responsive to all outstanding issues and place this application in condition for allowance. If this belief is incorrect, or other issues arise, do not hesitate to contact the undersigned or his associates at the telephone number listed below. Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account 50-0591 (Reference Number 09432/168002).

Respectfully submitted,

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